

THE LITERARY MIRROR.

VOL. 1.]

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[NO. 28.]

Sweet flowers and fruits from fair Parnassus' mount,
And varied knowledge from rich Science' fount,
We hither bring.

The Fate of Genius.

GENIUS and learning, though they sometimes confer honours, and beget esteem, are yet, when generally considered, not such enviable gifts or acquisitions as the voice of applause, or the whispers of approbation would seem to indicate.

Sensibility, the concomitant, if not the source of genius, though the fountain of refined delight, is yet but too often the spring of irritating distress, and the poison of tranquil pleasures—as the clear brook is muddled, or swallowed up by the mountain torrent. He who arrives at superior excellence in any of the fine arts, has, perhaps, more reason to lament his elevation, than to glory in his eminence. The breeze of public applause may be grateful, but the chilling blast of envy is insupportable.

It may be thought a felicity to him whom knowledge, ingenuity and perseverance raises above the level of mankind, to have conciliated the favour of the great; but friendship, save with equals, can hardly be lasting. The great can never long endure those whose abilities eclipse their own; and the man of genius and feeling cannot condescend to flatter. Unequal friendships are like the boreal meteors, which this moment blaze in vivid splendor, and glow in all the hues of colour, and the next are lost in night, and absorbed in darkness.

Public favour is not less capricious than private friendship. It is

"A bird of passage, lost as soon as found;

"Now in the moon, perhaps, now under ground."

He whom the voice of the public unites to praise, the public voice will conspire to censure.

That man, who, blest with common sense, an even and cheerful temper, and equability of disposition, need not envy the elevation of genius, or the

superiority of learning and science, when he sees the one contemned or neglected, and the other toiling without reward.

Whoever pants for fame, or longs for literary honours, would do well to take a review of the unfortunate fate of such men as have been eminently conspicuous in the fields of imagination, the regions of fancy, or the plains of philosophy. Bacon lived a life of uneasiness and distress. Raleigh ended his days upon a scaffold, the victim of faction. The learning and virtue of Moore could not secure a better doom. Spencer—charming Spencer, whose "Fairy Queen" I never read but with increase of admiration—died neglected, forsaken and in want!

The fate of Collins—one of our greatest Lyric poets, and whose mental derangement and death are supposed to have been occasioned by the world's neglect—is thus sublimely shadowed forth by a pathetic pencil.

"But who is he, whom later garlands grace?

Lo! his worn youth beneath the chilly grasp
Of penury, faints; and in her mournful shroud,
Dark'ning all joy, all promises of good.
All health, all hope, sad melancholy saps
In drear decay, the fabric of his mind!
See shudd'ring pity, o'er his fallen soul
Wrings her pale hands! regardless of the guide
That lifts her steps, regardless of himself,
Silent, yet wild his languid spirit lies.
The light of thought has wander'd from his eye,
It glares, but sees not! yet this breathing corse,
This youthful driv'ler nature's ghastliest form,
(Oh! who would love the lyre?) in all the courts
Of fancy, where abstracted beauty play'd
With wildest elegance, his ardent shell
Enamor'd struck, and charm'd her various soul."

Milton sold the copy-right of *Paradise Lost* for fifteen pounds, and finished his life in obscurity. Dryden lived in poverty, and died in distress. Otway, though his end be variously related, yet all his biographers agree in this, that he died prematurely and in want. Lee is said to have died in the street. Steele lived a perpetual warfare with bailiffs and catch-poles. Johnson is said to have sold "The Vicar of

Wakefield" to relieve its great author, Goldsmith, from the gripe of the law. Fielding lies buried in the Factory's burying ground at Lisbon, without a stone to mark the spot. Savage died in prison for a debt of eight pounds; and Chatterton—poor neglected Chatterton; ended his life by his own hand! and the great biographer of the English poets has recorded of the inimitable author of *Hudibras*, that "all that can be said of him (Butler) with certainty is, that he lived neglected, and died poor!"

Homer is the first poet, and beggar among the ancients; he was blind, and sung his ballads about the streets; but it is observed, that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus, the comic poet, was better off: he had two trades; he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill, in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave; and Bæthious died in gaol. Among the Italians, Paulo, Burghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, yet he died because he could get employment in none.—Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all the poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from a friend, in order to pay for a month's subsistence. He has left a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language: he dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into an hospital, which he himself had erected!

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger. France, Vau-gelas, one of the politest writers, and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only at night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is

very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging of his debts, he goes on thus: "But as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall be disposed of; in such case, it is my last will that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society: so that if I could not, while living, at least, when dead, I may be useful."

Cassander was one of the greatest genius of his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence. Being, by degrees, driven into hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found among them, he even ventured at last, ungratefully, to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from him that made him. If God (replied he) has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from him hereafter? But being answered, that a suspension of justice was no argument to induce us to doubt of its reality; let me entreat you (continued his confessor) by all that is dear, to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and friend. No (replied the exasperated wretch) you know the manner in which he left me to live; and (pointing to the straw on which he was stretched) you see the manner in which he left me to die!

Such is the fate of *envied* Genius! But when to pecuniary distresses are added sickness—separation, forever! from those upon whom the mind has dwelled with fond endearment, the unfeeling and touching insults of worldly power and avarice, and a long train of ills that are permitted to afflict even the good, the mind of refined sensibility, under the pressure of such evils, must greatly suffer.

One of the most lively, as well as the most natural writers in our language, has thus spoken of the merit of patient suffering:

There is (says he) nothing magnanimous in bearing misfortunes with fortitude, when the whole world is looking on: men in such circumstances will act bravely from motives of vanity; but he who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity; who, without friends to encourage, or acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his misfortunes, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great; whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

Alexis:

A FRAGMENT.

"If nothing else can change that stubborn heart of thine, the gloomy confines of a prison shall!" exclaimed the father of Alexis, to his only son. "I have nurtured thee and my parental love has heretofore indulged thee in what was pleasing to thy affections, in hope that I should have had the same return from thee, and that thou wouldest at my request, when, I spoke this matter to thee have readily complied. Thou knowest that I have long looked upon Arabella as a daughter, and thou wilt still prefer Margaret, that low bred girl, one that has nothing to bring with her, in comparison to the daughter of my friend."

Let me for this once be heard, cried Alexis, falling upon his knees before his father, I have loved Margaret ever since I can remember, and our love has increased with our years; I have plighted her my faith, and to her have I sworn eternal constancy. And would my dear, my honoured father have me bear the appellation of a perjured villain. She has my heart, and she alone shall.

And then you are determined to persevere, interrupted his father. But I will see whether it be proof against stone walls, whose thickness will not only shut out the light, but banish Margaret from thy sight. Nor will thy father stand before those eyes of thine while thou art immured in the thick dungeon that awaits thee, until thou confessest the error, with which thou art now infatuated—till then—Adieu.

Alexis was hurried to this place of confinement. The keeper of the prison had been ordered by the father of the unfortunate youth to use him with the utmost rigour—and he too well fulfilled the mandate.

The stay of Alexis in this dismal place of abode was but short. After a few days he was carried forth—not to the splendid mansion of his father, but where—

"The rude forefathers of the Hamlet sleep."

Dr. Beattie and his Son.

THE following interesting anecdote is related by Dr. Beattie, speaking of his son: He says—he had reached his fifth or sixth year, knew the alphabet and could read a little; but had received no particular information with respect to the author of his being, because I thought he could not yet understand such information, and because I had learned from my own experience, that to be made to repeat words not understood, is extremely detrimental to the faculties of a young mind. In the corner of a little garden without informing any person of the circumstance, I wrote in the mould with my fingers the initial letters of his name, and sowing the garden cresses in the furrows, covered up the seed, and smoothed the ground.

Ten days after he came running to me, and with astonishment in his countenance, told me that his name was growing in the garden. I laughed at the report, and seemed inclined to disregard it; but he insisted on my going to see what had happened. Yes, said I carelessly, on coming to the place, I see it is, but there is nothing in this worth notice—it is mere chance; and I went away. He followed me, and taking hold of my coat, said with some earnestness, it could not be mere chance, for that something must have contrived it so as to produce it.

I pretend not to give his words nor my own, for I have forgotten both; but I give the substance of what passed between us, in such language as we both understood. So you think, I said, that what appears so regular as the letters of your name, cannot be by chance? Yes, said he with firmness, I think so. Look at yourself, I replied, and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and other limbs; are they not regular in their appearance, and useful to you? He said they were. Came they then hither, said I, by

chance?—No, he answered, that cannot be; something must have made me. And what is that something? I asked. He said he did not know. (I took particular notice that he did not say as Rousseau fancies a child in like circumstances, would say—That his parents made him.) I had now gained what I aimed at, and saw that his reason taught him (though he could not express it) that what begins to be must have a cause; and that what is formed with regularity, must have an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the GREAT BEING who made him and all the world; concerning whose adorable name I gave him such such information as I thought he could in some measure comprehend. The lesson affected him greatly, and he never forgot either that, or the circumstance that introduced it.

Fraternal Affection.

The king of Chicho had three sons, and like many other parents, having most affection for the youngest, some days before his death declared him his successor to the exclusion of his brethren. This proceeding was the more extraordinary as it was contrary to the laws of the kingdom. The people, therefore, thought that, after the death of the king, they might, without any crime, raise the eldest son to the Throne. The design was universally approved of; but the new king calling to mind his father's last words, rejected the offer, and, taking the crown, placed it on the head of his younger brother, publicly declaring that he renounced it, and thought himself unworthy of it, as he was excluded by his father's will, and his father could not now retract what he had done. His brother, being affected with such a generous action, instantly entreated him not to oppose the inclination of the people, who desired him for their ruler. He urged that he alone was the lawful successor to the crown which he refused, and that their father could not infringe the laws of the kingdom: that he had been betrayed by an extravagant fondness, and that, in a word, the people had the power of redressing any breach in the established law.—Nothing, however, was capable of persuading his brother to accept of the crown. There was a glorious contest between the two princes; and, as they perceived that the dispute would be endless, they retired from court. Thus, each having both conquered and been vanquished, they went to end their days together in peaceful solitude, and left the kingdom to their other brother.

On Slander:

Against Slander there is no defence, Hell cannot boast so foul a fiend, nor men deplore so fell a foe. It stabs with a word—with a nod—with a shrug—with a look—with a smile. It is a pestilence walking in darkness, spreading contagion far and wide, which the most wary traveller cannot avoid. It is the heart-searching dagger of the dark assassin. It is the poisoned arrow, whose wound is incurable. It is the mortal sting of the deadly adder. Murder is its only employment. Innocence its prey—and ruin its sport.

Poetry.

There is nothing in poetry more exquisitely beautiful, than the following

Specter of Eve.

"Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the Sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glist'ning with dew: fragrant the fertile earth,
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
And these, the gems of heaven, her starry train.
But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends,
With charm of earliest birds, nor rising Sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistening with dew, nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by Moon,
Or glistening star-light, without thee is sweet."

Elegant Extract.

From a Sermon on "DOMESTIC HAPPINESS," by the Rev. William Jay.

Oh! what so refreshing, so soothing, so satisfying, as the placid joys of home!

See the traveller—Does duty call him for a season to leave his beloved circle? The image of his earthly happiness continues vividly in his remembrance: it quickens him to diligence: it makes him hail the hour which sees his purpose accomplished, and his face turned towards home: it communes with him as he journeys; and he hears the promise which causes him to hope. "Thou shalt know also that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy tabernacle and not sin." O the joyful reunion of a divided family—the pleasures of renewed interview and conversation after days of absence!

Behold the man of science—He drops the labour and painfulness of research—closes his volume—smooths his wrinkled brows—leaves his study—and unbending himself stoops to the capacities, yields to the wishes, and mingles with the diversions of his children.

"He will not blush that has a father's heart,
To take in childish play a childish part;
But bends his sturdy neck to play the toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy."

Take the man of trade—What reconciles him to the toil of business? What enables him to endure the fastidiousness and impertinence of customers?—What rewards him for so many hours of tedious confinement? Bye-and-bye the season of intercourse will arrive; he will behold the desire of his eyes and the children of his love, for whom he resigns his ease; and in their welfare and smiles he will find his recompence.

Yonder comes the labourer—He has borne the burden and heat of the day: the descending sun has released him from his toil: and he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half way down the lane, by the

side of which stands his cottage, his children run to meet him. One he carries, and one he leads. The companion of his humble life is ready to furnish him with his plain repast. See—his toil-worn countenance assumes an air of cheerfulness! his hardships are forgotten; fatigue vanishes; he eats, and is satisfied. The evening fair, he walks with uncovered head around his garden—enters again, and retires to rest; and "the rest of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much." Inhabitant of this lowly dwelling! who can be indifferent to thy comfort? Peace be to this house!

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

FOR THE LITERARY MIRROR.

'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all!

THIS sole line embraces a voluminous poem on human nature. The prejudices or just notions imbibed by our minds when young, influence the actions of our whole lives, but more forcibly at the decaying of our frame; the mental faculties must then partake of the system's infirmity and be weakened, as it were, to the primordial and prejudiced notions, acquired by juvenile education. Hence the dotage of age and the childish actions of men if undermined by a chronic distemper, or shaken to nought by an acute devouring fever. The obviousness of these truths may be illustrated by innumerable examples deducted from the very drama that is daily acted under our immediate view; an honorable warrior receives a mortal wound in the heat of battle; he contemplates his dissolution with a placid eye: glory, honor and the bewitchment of future fame hide, from his sight the scraggy and tremendous features with which death presents itself to the contemplation of the superstitious and the immoral wretch; a man of immaculate character, a pure christian, or a case hardened deist may quit life with resignation or without regret; but they cannot, like the warrior or the enthusiast, receive the mortal stroke without flinching; the former dies in full health (pardon me the solecism) whereas the latter must participate of the weakness which nature has rendered inseparable from the decaying disease that leads them into the tomb.

All civilized nations and savage tribes; all religions and sects have produced their enthusiasts and their martyrs, their heroes and their sages; yet, no man has ever been strictly the same in his opinion conduct and views for the short space of a twelve month. The hero that faces certain death unappalled by surrounding carnage; the savage that bawls his dying song when lacerated at the barbarous stake; the sectarian that cheerfully stirs up the flame of his own funeral pile, and the sage that welcomes the prisoner's cup would have been subjected to the immutable laws of nature, had their lives been taken away by the hand of time or yielded to morbid diseases. The warrior would have employed his last moments to wash off the stains of the very blood he once considered as the best ornament of his

person: The savage, dying in his hut, would have called to his couch the prophet of his tribe to intercede for the favors of the great spirit; the fanatick sectarian would have returned to the pure religion of his ancestors but for the persecutions of ignorance or the jealous wrath of an unprincipled tyrant; and the dogmatical philosopher would have laid aside his dissertations on the nature of pain and pleasure, to exclaim with the king of the Jews: *vanity of vanities.*

The christian, the philosopher, the indifferent deist and the metaphysician are more or less influenced by this inherent principle of our being; which, although emanated from a source common to mankind, is yet diversified in its form and appearance within the bosom of every individual comprising the whole of the human race.—There never existed two beings in all creation that were materially similar, neither have there ever been two persons in existence whose ideas and opinions did harmonize critically in all their points. A moral truth and a mathematical demonstration strike the comprehension of two individuals in a like manner, but the means or impulses with which the same sentiments are conveyed to the "sensorium commune" are always different from one another.

"What ought to hinder us (says an ancient writer) to adopt so many vague notions (and this proves that the Greeks, for being too positive, err, as much as the barbarians) is that the education, adopted habits, and ancient laws vary strangely: for there is not one of those things to which every body assents. On the contrary: in every clime, in every nation, in every state, in every town in every village, nay even in every house there exists a great diversity of sentiment: the men are in this particular at variance with the women, children think differently from their fathers and mothers; what one judges to be right, another condemns as wrong; one affirms a thing to be creditable that is branded as infamous by another. I wonder not that the vulgar and the ignorant who are generally the slaves of the habits, laws and prejudices of their country, whatever the establishment origin or form of them are, or have been; who, since their infancy, are accustomed to yield implicit obedience to them as to so many masters and tyrants and whose mind being, as it were, early debased and overwhelmed by their fetters cannot rise or elevate itself to the reach of bold and sublime ideas; I wonder not, I say, that the vulgar and the ignorant should follow blindly the traditions of their ancestors, leave their investigating faculties in a perfect slumber and affirm or deny without examination. But I am beyond expression amazed when I see all philosophers who profess to look after truth and demonstrate its evidence, separate themselves into sects, the decisions of which always differ and often are opposed in great and little things."

What this writer said of the Philosophy of his time may as well be applied to every sort of "association of men" at this very day. Human nature, like the luminary planets, has its rise, its declension and its eclipses; but its changes and revolutions shall never get beyond the orbit delineated since the beginning by its sublime and incomprehensible Author.

LUCIUS.

Selected Poetry.

Irregular Ode.

From the author to his mistress, after refusal.

By JOHN EDMUND HARDWOOD.

TURN'D so pale, when first the news I heard,
 Pale as I could, my love, WITH MY COMPLEXION !
 Sunk were mine eyes, and blue my grisly beard,
 And bent my beetle brows in sad reflection.
 My carcass on the hard, hard ground I threw ;
 A while the lamb-like patience of my soul
 Was lost amid the angry tempest's howl :
 Even you, my fair, whom I have lov'd so true,
 I call'd a little imp of evil,
 More false more treach'rous than the devil !
 I dare say now you thought that I should die !
 'Tis pity maid so fair, should be mistaken ;
 Alas ! I fear you will but gain a sigh,
 A tear or two, some angry looks and curses ;
 And if the muse be kind, some spiteful verses :
 But death ! no, no ; my pride will save my bacon.
 Not but I might, perchance, in sullen mood,
 This goodly throat with hempen cord adorning,
 Dangling from some tall poplar in the wood
 Dance to the breeze on a November morning :
 'Twould be so lover-like, to seek my death,
 On th' anniversary of that same hour,
 When, in the pride of Beauty's future pow'r,
 My infant mistress first inhaled her breath :
 I might, perchance, seek LETHY in the stream,
 Dive to that bliss which I had lost above ;
 Become, of village nurse, the midnight theme,
 Or form the ballad of 'REJECTED LOVE !'
 Now whether I'm seditious, or in fear,
 I want the heart to quit the scene of trouble ;
 Hope gives a hint there still is something near,
 And like a child I wish to grasp the bubble :
 She whispers, too, I may have better luck yet,
 So, if you please, I will not kick the bucket.
 I know you wish the village boys to hoot—
 'Look ! look ! there goes the poor desponding poet !'
 There goes the dangler on a petticoat !
 All this you wish, you cruel jade—you know it :
 But I shall balk you, mistress, on my life :
 For tho' tempestuous scorn now clouds me over,
 Some future sun may shine, some fairer wife
 May tender consolation to your lover,
 Meantime, while sweet THALIA is muse,
 I'll make to this same death a stout resistance ;
 Brushing at early dawn the healthy dews,
 To keep his scarecrow worship at a distance.

Epitaph

On an Insignificant Fellow.

Poor John Gray, below he lies !
 Nobody laughs, and nobody cries ;
 Where he's gone, and how he fares,
 Nobody knows, and nobody cares.

Anecdotes.

When Mr. Penn, a young gentleman well known for his eccentricities, walked from Hyde Park corner, to Hammersmith, for a wager of 100 guineas, with the honourable Danvers Butler, several gentlemen who had witnessed the contest were speaking of it to the Dutchess of Gordon, and added, that it was a pity that a man with so many good qualities as this Penn should be incessantly playing these unaccountable pranks. 'So it is,' said her grace, but why don't you advise him better ? He seems to be a PEN that every body cuts, but nobody mends."

A Sharper who had pawned his hat, going out of church in the middle of a crowd, snatched a man's hat from under his arm. The poor fellow, feeling his hat gone, cried, "They have stolen my hat." The sharper, immediately putting the hat on his head, and covering it with both hands, exclaimed, "Have they ! I defy them to take mine."

Not long since a country fellow passing a street in New-York, was gazing at a thousand fine things ; a person from a window exclaimed, Friend do you think you are in Heaven ? to which he replied, no Sir, but I might had I not looked up and seen the devil in the window.

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